



PENGUIN CLASSICS



Title: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Author: Mark Twain

Imprint: Penguin Classics

Publisher: Penguin Publishing Group

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ISBN: 9780143107330

Format: Paperback

Grade Range: 7 Up

(Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK RESUME: THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

BOOK SYNOPSIS

A consummate prankster with a quick wit, Tom Sawyer dreams of a bigger fate than simply being a "rich boy." Yet through the novel's humorous escapades—from the famous episode of the whitewashed fence to the trial of Injun Joe—Mark Twain explores the deeper themes of the adult world, one of dishonesty and superstition, murder and revenge, starvation and slavery.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"*Huckleberry Finn* may be the greater book, but *Tom Sawyer* has always been more widely read. Moreover, it is a book that can be enjoyed equally by both children and adults. Twain, who called it a "hymn" to boyhood, would be thrilled that in narrator Patrick Fraley his hymn has found its most passionate voice. Many good unabridged readings of *Tom Sawyer* have already been recorded, but most are simply that: readings. Fraley's performance is something more; in attempting to bring each character to life, his enthusiasm for the material is so palpable that the mere sound of his voice commands attention. A can't-miss addition to all libraries, including those that have other *Tom Sawyer* programs. — *Library Journal*

"Tom Sawyer is the American prototype of the good bad boy. Unlike his friend Huck Finn, a genuine outcast, he is always into mischief but never in real trouble. He is a member of society and shares its values—at the end of the novel, he will not let Huck be a member of his robber gang until Huck agrees to live a respectable life with the Widow Douglas. And despite the mean trick Tom plays on his Aunt Polly, (that is, pretending to be dead so he can attend his own funeral), his place in her family is never in doubt. *Tom Sawyer* is episodic and open-ended, as much a series of loosely connected short stories as a novel. Tom plays hooky from school, and, condemned to spend Saturday whitewashing a fence as punishment, tricks his friends into doing it. He wins a prize at Sunday school, not by memorizing Scripture but by trading for the tickets issued to children who did memorize it. He plays pirates and robbers, then gets a taste of the real thing when he sees the outlaw Injun Joe committing a murder. Having fallen in love with Becky Thatcher, he accompanies her on a picnic that her parents give for the village children, and the two get lost in a cave. Finally—a touch without which no boy's adventure book would be complete—Tom and Huck explore the cave again and find the treasure Injun Joe had hidden there. *Tom Sawyer* is all innocent nostalgia, a rhapsodic memory piece. Told from an adult's point of view, it is weakest where Twain intrudes and moralizes. At its best, it lacks the seriousness—the constant underlying awareness of the dark side of life—of *Huckleberry Finn*, its famous sequel. As an unpretentious boyhood idyll, it is unsurpassed.

—*Magill Book Review*

Updated 9.12.2024

Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

“Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* holds a special place in American literature. Never out of print since its original publication in 1876 and equally beloved by both children and adults, it is one of the most widely read American novels ever published.” —*Critical Insights: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (2022)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [NEA Big Read Reader Resources](#)
- Penguin Random House [Reader’s Guide](#)
- Scholastic [Educator’s Guide](#)
- [TwainWeb](#)
- [Mark Twain in His Times](#) (University of Virginia)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- [Escambia County School District \(FL\)](#) (9 January 2024)
More than 1,600 books banned in Escambia County, Florida (including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*). PEN America, Penguin Random House, and a diverse group of authors joined with parents and students in Escambia County for a first of its kind federal lawsuit alleging that an earlier set of book bans and restrictions violate their rights to free speech and equal protection under the law.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

“Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine. Huck Finn is drawn from life; Tom Sawyer also, but not from an individual—he is a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew, and therefore belongs to the composite order of architecture.

The odd superstitions touched upon were all prevalent among children and slaves in the West at the period of this story—that is to say, thirty or forty years ago.

Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in.” —*Preface of the book* (1876)

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